

AMBS alumni news

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

2 Nominee for Alumni Executive Committee

James Logan gives commencement address

3 Alumni news notes

Thank you, Ted and Gayle
In Memoriam

4 AMBS Notes

AMBS–Kansas Center

Celebrations fill this issue of AMBS Alumni News. Wilma Bailey's service of teaching and writing; Gayle Gerber Koontz's and Ted Koontz's 31 fruitful years of teaching at AMBS. A stirring commencement address by alumnus James Logan. The beginning of a new way for AMBS to serve in central Kansas. Also the lives of two dear friends of AMBS: Don Steider and Vincent Harding.

As a new year begins for the seminary, our 56th year on the Elkhart campus, join us in giving thanks to God for the faithful witness of these alumni, alumnae and friends. We give thanks for you, too—for all alumni contributing to God's reconciling mission in the world.

Let us know what you are doing and how you are celebrating God's presence in your life and ministry.

Finally, thank you to Rhoda Schrag, who served on the alumni executive committee for four years, most recently as chair.

— Mary E. Klassen, editor

2014 Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition WILMA ANN BAILEY

Wilma Ann Bailey (MDiv 1979) is a scholar who gives her gifts to the church and for this AMBS honors her this year with the annual AMBS Alumni Ministry and Service Recognition.

Wilma grew up in New York City, graduating from Herbert H. Lehman College (formerly Hunter College in the Bronx) with a B.S. degree. She earned an MDiv from AMBS in 1979 and followed this with a Master of Arts and PhD from Vanderbilt University. For 14 years she has taught at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis. In 2010 she was awarded the title "Minnie Vautrin Professor of Christian Witness" in recognition of her work related to peace and justice issues.

Prior to this she taught at Messiah College, Grantham, Pa., and taught and directed the James Lark Leadership Program at Goshen College. She was licensed for ministry in 1980 by Indiana-Michigan Mennonite Conference, becoming the first woman to be licensed by the conference. She has served on boards of the Mennonite Church, Mennonite Central Committee, Philhaven and Eastern Mennonite University.

Wilma is a prolific writer of both scholarly materials and Bible studies for the church. She is author of the Lamentations volume in the Believers Church Bible Commentary series to be released this fall, of "You shall not kill" or "You shall not murder": The assault on a biblical text (Liturgical Press, 2005) and many more books. She also has published seven volumes and has another forthcoming of Adult Bible Study Guides through Faith & Life Press, in addition to numerous articles, essays and book reviews on topics related to peace and justice, women in ancient Israel and laments, and the environment.

In addition, she has taught in other world contexts, including four concentrated courses at Christian Theological Seminary



in Chunnakam, Sri Lanka, a seminary reviving its program after nearly 30 years of civil war. She participated in an agricultural project sponsored by the Brethren in Christ Church in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe, and lectured on land and land use in the Bible and theologies of the land in the Bible in 2009. Also that year, she spoke at the Mennonite World Conference in Asuncion, Paraguay, on "The earth belongs to the Lord."

Wilma will return to AMBS two times this fall. At the Rooted and Grounded conference, Sept. 18–20, she will present a paper, "Who gets to eat in the Garden of Eden?" In October she will receive the alumni recognition and share with the campus community about her ministry. ●

Nominee for executive committee Kay Bontrager-Singer



To affirm Kay Bontrager-Singer as a member at large on the AMBS Alumni Executive Committee, please return the enclosed postcard or send an email message to Janeen Bertsche Johnson, alumni director: jbjohnson@ambs.edu.

Kay Bontrager-Singer received an MDiv from AMBS in 2012. Kay's first experience as a student at AMBS was in the mid 1980s before pursuing a Master of Social Work degree, only to return to AMBS 20 years later.

She has been a pastor at Faith Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind., for the past eight years and serves as a practicum supervisor to Master-level social work students. She is a spiritual director and a retreat leader as well as having a decade of experience as a floral designer. Kay also is a certified Master Gardener and currently is pursuing training as a Naturalist. She believes all of her life experiences have informed her current pastoral ministry, even the experience in floral design. Previously Kay served as Mennonite Central Committee Great Lakes Board Chair and MCC US Board vice chair.

Kay lives happily with Jamey, her husband of 29 years, and they have three sons, Jacob and Hans in college and Benjamin in middle school. She loves being creative, whether that is in her flower and vegetable garden or playing with water color paints. Kay loves to read and since completing seminary study indulges herself in reading novels, something that went by the wayside during her seminary years. Her favorite evening activities are going for walks with her husband and dog, Opus, or sitting on her front porch swing sipping mint garden tea. ●

Rooted and Grounded conference this fall

More than 50 paper and workshop presentations are scheduled during the September 18–20 conference focusing on land and Christian discipleship at AMBS. In addition, three keynote speakers will address the theme from their perspectives:

- **Ellen Davis**, Professor at Duke Divinity School, Durham, N.C., and author of *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- **S. Roy Kaufman (MDiv 1969)**, retired Mennonite pastor and author of *Healing God's Earth: Rural Community in the Context of Urban Civilization* (Wipf and Stock, 2013).
- **Barbara Rossing**, professor at the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago and author of *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation* (Basic Books, 2004).

Participants will have opportunities for immersion experiences, conversations with others who also are committed to care for creation and working in the AMBS garden.

The conference planning committee is chaired by **Janeen Bertsche Johnson (MDiv 1989)**, campus pastor, and **Ryan Harker**, MDiv student and coordinator of the gardens at AMBS.

Information, including the schedule, fees and an online registration form, are on the AMBS website: www.ambs.edu/rootedandgrounded. ●

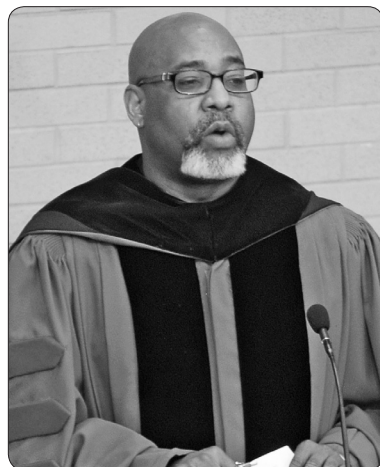
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[www.ambs.edu/news-events/
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Listen to Pastors Week recordings
of the "Fab Five" (AMBS's newest
professors) on iTunes U:
www.ambs.edu/news-events/iTunesU.cfm

James Logan gives commencement address



James Logan (MATS 1987), associate professor at Earlham College, Richmond, Ind., presented the address at the AMBS commencement service on Saturday, May 24.

In his address, "A Christian Politics of (Sometimes Funky) Love," James challenged graduates to continue and expand their involvement in the tough issues present in the world.

He also told graduates to make sure that they go forward wrapped the Christian love "with a wise mixture of toughness, gentleness, joy, courage, prudence, temperance, humility, mercy, and a very, very difficult peaceableness."

Follow the links on www.ambs.edu/news-events/Commencement.cfm to listen to his address. ●

ALUMNI NEWS NOTES

Alan Stucky (MDiv 2009) has published *The Harvest is Plentiful: Being Missional in a Small Town* (www.blurb.com/b/5160625-the-harvest-is-plentiful). He also has become pastor of First Church of the Brethren in Wichita, Kan.

Obed Dashan (MDiv 1990) has been elected vice president of his church, Church of Christ in Nations, responsible for leading and helping leaders to teach/preach and disciple their congregations. The church has congregations in Nigeria, Ghana, Malawi, Niger Republic, Cameroon, Benin Republic and the United Kingdom. Previously he was general secretary.

Bruce Hiebert (MDiv 1989) is the 2014 winner of the Canadian Church Press Award for Theological Reflection for a three-part series he wrote on the use of the Bible in ethics for the *Canadian Mennonite*.

Darrin W. Snyder Belousek (former student) has published *Good News: The Advent of Salvation in the Gospel of Luke* (www.litpress.org/Products/3758/good-news.aspx).

Paul C. Heidebrecht (MATS 2000) has published *Beyond the Cutting Edge? Yoder, Technology, and the Practices of the Church* (Wipf and Stock, 2014).

Wes Goertzen (MDiv 2013) is pastor of Whitewater Mennonite Church, Boissevain, Man.

Ginny Hartman (Certificate 2007) is chaplain of Pleasant View Retirement Community, Manheim, Pa.

Miriam Zehr (current student) was ordained January 19 at Oak Grove Mennonite Church, Smithville, Ohio.

Ann Jacobs (current student) was licensed for ministry April 27 at New Life Fellowship Ministry, South Bend.

Moriah Hurst (MDiv 2008) was ordained at Assembly Mennonite Church, Goshen, Ind., on January 26, for her work with Mennonite Mission Network in Australia.

Craig Neufeld (MDiv 2008) was ordained April 27 at Rosthern (Sask.) Mennonite Church.

Tammy Sawatzky (MATS 2002) is public relations coordinator for the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the oldest civic art gallery in Canada and home to the largest collection of contemporary Inuit art in the world. Previously she was communications coordinator at Canadian Mennonite University.

DEATHS

Rosa Hershberger (MDiv 1987) died November 30, 2013, in Elkhart, Ind.

Eunice Yantzi (MDiv 2003) died May 26 in Toronto, Ont. She has been pastoral assistant at Toronto Mennonite New Life Church.

BIRTHS

Adam Stephen to **Alyssa Mezsick (current student)** and Steve Mezsick, Edwardsburg, Mich., May 12.

Nathan Luke to **Katherine and Peter Goerzen** (current students), May 1, in Newton Kan. ●

Thank you, Ted and Gayle



Ted Koontz and Gayle Gerber Koontz were honored in several ways in spring as they retired from regular teaching at AMBS.

Rebecca Slough, academic dean, noted that Gayle is an ethicist and theologian for the church, focusing on pressing contemporary issues facing Christians, particularly Mennonites.

Ted has been director of peace studies, Rebecca noted,

combining “political realism, commitment to justice, consistent questioning of God’s nature in light of unrelenting injustice and his deep love for the church.”

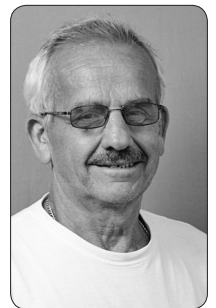
Gayle and Ted will continue to teach occasionally, and Gayle will teach an online Anabaptist Short Course, Engaging John Howard Yoder’s *Theology Today*, next spring. ●

In Memoriam

Don Steider, director of maintenance from 1989 to 2010, died June 27 in an accident at his home near Goshen.

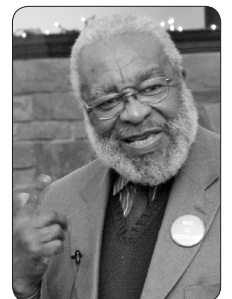
On campus and at the memorial service, Don was remembered for his genuine friendship to many, which included knowing all students by name. We also remember him for his pranks and ready laughter and his willingness to help anyone at any time.

An Elkhart Truth feature about Don can be viewed at www.elkharttruth.com/hometown/2014/07/01/Family-and-Friends-Remember-Don-Steider.html



Vincent Harding died May 19. Among the blessings of his ministry are the years he was co-pastor of Woodlawn Mennonite Church in Chicago, where Mennonite Biblical Seminary was located until 1958, and his challenges to us at the celebration of Martin Luther King Jr Day in 2012.

Harding was a scholar and historian active in the Civil Rights Movement. He was an associate of Martin Luther King Jr and drafted speeches for him, including his anti-Vietnam speech, “A Time to Break Silence.” ●



Pastors Week 2015

"Where culture blurs theology: What is an Anabaptist Christian" is the theme that four presenters will address:

- Greg Boyd, PhD
- Drew Hart, MDiv, PhD student
- Janet Plenert, **MATS 2008**
- Elizabeth Soto Albrecht, (student 1984–85), DMin

Visit www.ambs.edu/pastorsweek for details of the January 26–29 event.

Anabaptist Short Courses

The six-week, non-credit, online courses begin a new series in fall:

- Exploring Anabaptist History and Theology, led by Jamie Pitts, PhD, Oct. 22–Dec. 3

www.ambs.edu/anabaptistshortcourses

Faculty scholarship, 2013–14

Seven books lead the list of published work by AMBS employees and the Institute of Mennonite Studies in the 2013–14 year. To see a complete list of books, journals and articles, visit www.ambs.edu/publishing/Faculty-scholarship.cfm.

New release from IMS

Struggles for Shalom: Peace and Violence across the Testaments is the latest release from the Institute of Mennonite Studies. It honors two professors emeriti—**Willard Swartley** and **Perry Yoder**—and was edited by two alumni: **Laura Brenneman (MATS 2001)** and **Brad Schantz (MDiv 2000)**. To read more and follow a link to a gallery of photos from the book celebration, visit www.ambs.edu/publishing/Struggles-for-Shalom.cfm

Graduate awards

The newest alumni to receive awards are several 2014 graduates chosen by faculty for annual recognition:

- **Joon Hyoung Park (MDiv)**, Award of excellence in missional leadership
- **Julia Gingrich (MDiv)**, Award of excellence in preaching
- **Trina Siegrist (MDiv)**, Award of excellence in pastoral care and counseling
- **Todd Gusler (MDiv)**, Award of excellence in Christian formation

- **Elizabeth Miller (MATS)**, C.J. Dyck award for excellence in history
- **Jason Greig (MDiv)**, Marlin E. Miller award for theological studies
- **Eric Vandrick (MATS)**, Marlin E. Miller award for theological studies
- **Caitlin Desjardins (MDiv)**, Gertrude Roten award for excellence in Greek exegesis
- **Lydia Nofziger (MDiv)**, Millard Lind award for excellence in biblical interpretation
- **Naomi Tice (MACF)**, Heart of the Community award

New alumni director

Janeen Bertsche Johnson (MDiv 1989 and Campus Pastor) is now also the Alumni Director of AMBS. Bob Rosa, who has filled this roll for two years, is focusing more time on recruitment. If you have counsel for how AMBS can better serve alumni and keep alumni connected to each other and to AMBS, please send ideas to Janeen: jbjohnson@ambs.edu. ●



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AMBS–Kansas Center begins

AMBS–Kansas Center is the new presence of the seminary in the region around North Newton, Kan.

For a combined history of 34 years, AMBS–Great Plains extension site and Conference-Based Theological Program offered master's-level courses in the area.

The streamlined AMBS–Kansas Center

will continue to offer one course each term.

Katherine Goerzen, MDiv student, serves as the part-time coordinator for AMBS–Kansas Center. **Lois Barrett (MDiv 1983)**, professor of theology and Anabaptist studies, continues as the primary faculty member in Kansas.



Former directors of the seminary program in Kansas joined in a June 1 celebration of AMBS involvement in the region: Floyd Bartel, Jacob Friesen and Dorothea Janzen. Dorothy Nickel Friesen, interim director, and Rebecca Slough, academic dean, are at the right.

Vada Snider

